

FTR

Please forgive my inability to attend this year's hearing on HB 5032. It is no disrespect to you or a sign of my lessening interest in the matter. Instead, I am working at Darien High School and cannot get away.

The facts really haven't changed over the last few years. More than 6,000 men, women and children are searching the National Marrow Donor Program Registry for a life-saving donor.

There are over 13 million registered donors as of today.

The bone marrow transplanted can help fight and cure various forms of leukemia, lymphoma, sickle cell anemia, myeloma and other plasma cell disorders, and some forms of breast cancer.

For each of the 6,000 in need of help, friends and neighbors do what they can. Some rush out and have their marrow tested, others organize registration drives. Given that each test costs between \$50-75 this can be a major impediment for those on fixed incomes, from students to seniors.

Personally, when my son needed a transplant in 2008, his friends rallied and organized two drives in Fairfield and one in Baltimore. In all cases, they found grant money to cover the costs because his college-aged peers couldn't afford it otherwise. With the tough economic times we're in, finding such money in the future may be difficult but the need does not change.

The pool needs to be expanded to help those in need. The cost is believed to be one reason African-Americans, Latin Americans, and those of mixed races are woefully underrepresented in the national registry.

By requiring insurance companies to cover the relatively small cost, the burden is lifted, the pool can grow and more can be speedily helped. I urge you to once more pass HB 5032 and lobby our new governor to sign this into law.

Thank you once more for your time and consideration.

Robert Greenberger